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ABSTRACT

Recent legislation requiring schools to include handicapped children in the regular classroom when feasible has placed responsibility for the proper training of teachers in the field of special education in the hands of colleges of education. Boston College has developed a program for the training of students preparing to teach in the elementary grades. This "Integrated Curriculum" is a master plan for an individualized undergraduate learning experience. A solid foundation in the liberal arts, a strong component of professional courses, a sequence of field-based professional experiences, and training in alternative areas of specialization have been combined to enable students to meet established certification requirements and also to develop expertise in emerging areas where licensure requirements have yet to be determined. Goals of this program are identified as: (1) to increase the ability of the regular class teacher to meet the needs of mildly handicapped children in the regular classroom; (2) to retrain undergraduate faculty to provide them with skills for ultimate transmittal to students; (3) to develop an elementary teacher training program based on competencies validated as essential through a survey of field practice sites; (4) to increase career alternatives for education students; (5) to establish ties with a wide range of human services organizations as potential practical sites for students not wishing to teach but wishing to remain in the broader range of human services; and (6) to establish a system of open communications with present field sites so continual input into the needs of practitioners will be assured thereby enhancing relevant changes in both graduate and inservice programing. (JD)

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BOSTON COLLEGE'S INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

Preserving the Past, Responding to the Present, Anticipating the Future

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SUMMARY

Boston College was one of the original recipients of a Dean's Project Grant awarded by the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped in 1975. Dean's Projects have as their focus the revamping of teacher education programs to include skills necessary for general educators in meeting the needs of mildly handicapped children in regular classroom settings.

The School of Education at Boston College has taken this project nucleus, involved faculty members in professional development programs, rebuilt a curriculum using a competency-based format and developed a number of career alternatives within the broad range of education and education-related professions.

Resulting from the commitments of University and School administrators, professionals performing in various roles in the Field of Education, the instructional faculty within the Boston College School of Education, students, both past and present of the Boston College School of Education, and a wide variety of private and state resources, an Integrated Curriculum has developed. The Curriculum is premised on a support system of broadened professional abilities of faculty, group participation in problem solving, individual decision-making for students and the use of innovation in teaching methods used at the college level.

The success of the Integrated Curriculum which is now the core curriculum of the School of Education might well be attributed to the

the flexibility of program, i.e., the wide array of career alternatives to which a student might aspire and thereby create for himself a highly individualized professional experience.

The following pages describe the products and processes involved in this undertaking. Further documentation for any or all aspects contained herein is available to the reader upon request

L. E. Przewlocki

Lester E. Przewlocki, Dean
School of Education

Since its founding in 1952, the Boston College School of Education has existed in a period of extraordinary social change, and no area had seen more evidence of change than the teaching profession itself. For example, when the school began some twenty-five years ago, Special Education was still a novel and generally unfamiliar concept. Today, by contrast, Special Education has become a primary concern within the profession as well as the object of special funding programs and the subject of government regulation and legislation.

The greatest challenge confronting the School of Education throughout its lifetime has been the need for effective professional response in a dynamic social order. It is accurate to say that the School has consistently met that challenge and has, in the process, earned a reputation for the quality and excellence of both its programs and its graduates.

One of the most recent efforts in responding to changing needs was a three-year project to revise the program of studies for the School of Education. This has made our curriculum a pacesetter for professional preparation within broad areas of human service. Under a grant from the United States Office of Education, Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, the Education faculty have availed themselves of numerous opportunities to update their own knowledge and skills and adapt them for use in a new Integrated Curriculum.

Integrated Curriculum

The Integrated Curriculum now in effect is a master plan for an individualized undergraduate learning experience for students majoring in

Elementary Education. A solid foundation in the liberal arts, a strong component of professional courses, a sequence of field-based professional experiences, and training in alternative areas of specialization have been combined to enable students not only to meet established Massachusetts certification requirements but also to develop expertise in emerging areas where licensure requirements have yet to be determined.

Liberal Arts

The liberal arts component of the Integrated Curriculum consists of the University's Core Requirement and includes those courses that have been the particular prize of Jesuit higher education for more than four centuries. However, the selection of Core courses in theology, mathematics, science and the humanities is not unrelated to the students' professional goals. Certain majors and specialties require that specific Core courses be taken as a prerequisite for acceptance into particular fields of concentration within the School of Education. For this reason, close contact with a faculty advisor in planning a well-balanced program is the key to meeting each student's individual needs and interests within the broad range of educational and professional possibilities.

Professional Course Work

The standard sequence of professional course work leads to certification as an elementary teacher. The curriculum in elementary teacher preparation has undergone dramatic changes since 1975, reflecting current educational trends and classroom situations. As a result of collaboration by the various divisions within the School of Education (Curriculum and Instruction, Special Education, Educational Psychology, Educational Research,

etc.) all elementary majors are now provided with the knowledge, skills and experience to manage an "expanded classroom" where the student population includes mildly handicapped children. The latest available research findings have been incorporated into a sequential program based on student attainment of specific competencies in the following areas: Typical and Atypical Development, the Nature of Handicapping Conditions, Learning Environments, Teaching Techniques, Learning Styles, Classroom Management, Curriculum Development, Assessment, Planning and Evaluation.

Currently, Special Education is by far the most popular alternative within the elementary program. Because the present state regulations require elementary training prior to endorsement as a "special educator," Boston College students who elect to concentrate in Special Education fulfill the requirements for dual certification within the state.

Field Experience

The on-campus teacher preparation curriculum is vitally linked with a network of field experience sites to provide a laboratory setting where students may implement and test their on-campus experiences. Field work is an integral part of the student program beginning with observation in sophomore year and progressing through a semester of student teaching in the senior year.

Alternative Approaches

In filling out their program of studies, students in elementary education take a number of courses developing techniques in alternatives

to classroom teaching. An alternative is defined as a cluster of courses (a minimum of three) which provides an in-depth concentration in a selected area of the educational spectrum, in other words, a specialization. When an alternative program of less than six courses is pursued, students may, with consent of advisors, select appropriate offerings to constitute a legitimate minor within their programs. The alternatives to traditional classroom teaching which are currently available within the elementary program include Special Education, Early Childhood, Adapted Physical Education, Alternative Learning Environments, Mathematics, Education of the Gifted, Reading, Vocational Special Education, Media/Fine Arts, Media/Speech and Communication, and Speech Science.

Project Origins

In 1972, the Massachusetts Legislature, after much debate, passed the Bartley-Daly Act. When codified, the Act became Chapter 766 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth. Chapter 766 is the comprehensive special education law of Massachusetts and the prototype of the federal mandate which former President Ford signed into law in November of 1975, P.L. 94-142.

Students and faculty members at Boston College were made aware early of the "mainstreaming" movement because of the experiences which they had encountered in classrooms throughout the state beginning in the Fall of 1974. Dialogue between students and faculty led to the realization that Boston College was ill equipped to provide elementary teacher trainees with the skills they would need as a result of the expanded responsibilities mandated through the new legislation.

Faculty members from the Divisions of Curriculum and Instruction and Special Education and Rehabilitation met with the Dean of the School of Education early in the 1975 Spring Semester to discuss the need for curriculum revision. Sub-committees were established and the following goals identified:

(1) To increase the ability of the regular class teacher to more effectively meet the needs of mildly handicapped children in regular classroom settings,

(2) To retrain undergraduate faculty in order to provide them with the skills for ultimate transmittal to students,

(3) To develop an elementary teacher training program based on competencies validated as essential through a survey of field practica sites,

(4) To increase career alternatives for students by opening doors to other colleges within the University, i.e., School of Arts and Sciences, School of Nursing, School of Management, School of Law,

(5) To establish ties with a wide range of human service organizations as potential practica sites for students not wishing to teach but desirous of remaining in the broader range of human services, and finally,

(6) To establish a system of open communications with present field sites so that continual input into the needs of practitioners will be assured thereby enhancing relevant changes in both graduate and in-service programing.

Objectives

Major subcomponents of what became known as the Integrated Curriculum Project included: (1) Upgrading of skills of both regular and special education faculties, (2) Identification of actual skills needed by elementary teachers in view of the new legislation, (3) Development of competency statements for each of the identified skills, (4) Organization of competency

clusters into deliverable units, (5) Staffing and completion of administrative arrangements, (6) Program implementation and (7) Evaluation.

Faculty Development

A faculty needs assessment was constructed in view of the projected outcomes. Results of the open-ended instrument which was administered in the Fall of 1975 indicated faculty enthusiasm for the undertaking, positive attitudes towards increasing faculty knowledges and skills, general agreement with project goals and suggestions for organizational workshops, instructional workshops, on-site visitations, the establishment of a professional library and a planned program for the systematic review of instructional materials for use and/or purchase.

Since the onset of the program, faculty development has been continuous. Participation in any of the numerous workshops which have been held in the area has been voluntary; yet attendance has been relatively high throughout the three years of operation.

Faculty Development is one of the most costly and most time consuming aspects of the program. Just as students learn at their own rates, so too professors are individually motivated. Among the various workshops and conferences attended by faculty are: Competency Specification Conferences, Precision Teaching Workshops, Workshops on Observation and Behavioral Analysis, Mainstreaming, Dealing with Classroom Differences, Project Evaluation Seminars, Cognitive Mapping and Organizational Development. A Media Center consisting of instructional materials for use with both faculty and students, films, filmstrips, videotapes, current research and trade books was established

and is in constant use.

Field Skills Identification

The process of validating skills necessary for success as an elementary teacher was accomplished through the development of an instrument based on skills which were currently being taught, recent research finds and supposed needs identified by teachers in the field and faculty. Questionnaires were sent to over three hundred graduates from the School of Education's Class of 1975. Although most of them had been teaching for only seven months, they were most helpful in their responses. From the seventy-eight per cent return, it was determined that the greatest areas of need were: (1) Behavior Management Techniques, (2) Instructional Strategies for children identified as having special needs, (3) Knowledge level competencies of high incidence handicapping conditions and (4) Effective interpersonal relationships.

Development of Competency Statements

In a program based on performance objectives or competencies, knowledges and skills are specified and enabling activities which lead to the achievement of these competencies are identified. Methods of evaluating the extent to which students have mastered the competencies also must be developed. To this end, faculty committees were established to generate the specific competencies. It is important to note that careful coordination between curriculum development and faculty development activities is absolutely essential. As the faculty grows in confidence and knowledge, so also the curriculum takes on new dimensions in both scope and breadth. In the case of Boston

College, because of the impetus provided by federal funding, the necessary supports for forging ahead were made available to the faculty. As an outcome, the combined efforts of faculty produced hundreds of competencies.

Competencies had been developed by having each faculty member initially made responsible for objectives in his particular area of expertise, i.e., the professor of mathematics generated performance statements in that discipline. Members of the Division of Special Education and Rehabilitation developed competencies directed at general knowledge of handicapping conditions, behavior management and special strategies. The result of this division of labor was a proliferation of knowledge level competencies in each discipline with a few higher level tasks identified in some areas. However, what in essence the data reflected were segmented learning statements, lacking the Gestalt of a truly integrated base for a core curriculum. Following the elimination of duplicates, the task of combining special education inputs with those of the philosophy, psychology, reading, language arts, social studies, mathematics, science, measurement and educational history courses was undertaken.

The model of the competent teacher generated from our survey data called for field experiences to be introduced still earlier in the curriculum than the sophomore year. This meant that for the first time in the twenty-five year history of the Boston College School of Education students would be introduced to specially selected professional experiences during their freshman year. Before the Fall of 1976, no students matriculated in the School of Education before their sophomore year since the first year of college was devoted exclusively to fulfillment of meeting the University's liberal arts requirement. The incorporation of a freshman experience into the required curriculum constituted our first break with long-standing

tradition. In the Fall of 1976, Education 040, "Communications in Education," was offered to all freshmen. The experience was modular in approach with a heavy emphasis in developing communication skills, serious introspection of the resources which students brought to the broad range of education-related careers and personal assessment of needs to be developed in view of selected vocational options.

Concurrent with the whole process of curriculum development and faculty upgrading, planning for a smooth transition from a rigid course requirement base to a competency based format was ongoing. Faculty development, even for a group committed to well-defined goals for curricula change, is a slower process than was originally anticipated. The faculty development factor resulted in a full year delay in implementation of the major components of the new program. At a two-day meeting of faculty held in late Spring 1976, it was decided that implementation take place with the Class of 1980. Pragmatically this meant that the changes in the 1976-77 academic year would be limited to changes in the freshman year only. During the 1977-1978 year, necessary changes and refinement of the freshman experience would have been completed and the initial changes in sophomore curriculum would be introduced. Hence, the focus of planning during the 1976-77 academic year was the sophomore program. Allowing for the extra year of planning time for the sophomore committees resulted in the formulation of two six-credit offerings, "Developmental Foundations" and Conducting Educational Interactions."

Developmental Foundations is an outgrowth of the former Child Growth

and Development course and the Habilitation of Exceptional Children course. Modular in approach, Developmental Foundations is team taught by the Divisions of Educational Psychology and the Division of Special Education and Rehabilitation. Prime emphasis is placed on the parallel teaching of typical and atypical growth. Attached to this offering is a field experience in the Boston College Campus School, a private school for multi-handicapped youngsters. Trainees in the elementary teacher training program are required to work with students displaying a range of handicaps from retardation through deafness. Trainee awareness of growth, educational, psychomotor and social, in these children develops an attitude of confidence in their abilities to meet the needs of contributing to the growth of less severely involved youngsters in classroom settings. The requirement of having all regular elementary trainees work with moderately to severely impaired youngsters is also a new concept which could have definite bearings upon the ultimate career choices of the students.

Conducting Educational Interactions, a second six-credit hour offering to sophomores, also is modular in approach and is team taught by the faculties from Special Education and Rehabilitation and Curriculum and Instruction. In addition, modules taught by staff from the Boston College School of Nursing, the Career Placement Center, and the Instructional Media Center are melded to provide an overview of the essentials of teaching, behavioral management of large group, small group and individual behaviors, physiological factors involved in the learning process, creation and use of media and the career planning and documentation of individual choices. The

active involvement by departments and schools on campus other than the School of Education is one step closer towards meeting the basic needs of students going into the education profession in a time when prospects for employment might well be dependent on the versatility of preservice experiences offered by the training institutions.

Alternatives Developed Within Program

Mention has been made of the possible career choices from which students might select vocational tracks. Options exist for students of education to complete programs leading toward certification as classroom teachers or they may elect a track for which certification is not required or standards not yet developed. Students may, for example, receive a degree in Education while electing coursework in Journalism, Creative Writing or Management. Bi-lingual education requires fluency in a second language which oftentimes means a Minor from the School of Arts and Sciences. Programs are currently being offered by those electing educational publishing as a career. One of the newly-created options was developed jointly with the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health and prepares individuals to operate half-way houses for deinstitutionalized adults. One alternative currently in the planning stages deals with meeting identified needs of pre-delinquent youths prior to the point of their establishing criminal records. Planning for this option is occurring between members of the Educational Psychology faculty, the School of Social Work faculty and members of the Massachusetts Court System. Plans for programs in Geriatrics and Recreation are on the drawing boards.

It should be noted that students electing to matriculate in a non-certification track are required to sign a statement which clearly identifies the program they have chosen and the fact that the program does not lead to certification. This protects the University from possible future litigation should the student decide at a later date that he wishes to teach.

Evaluation

Evaluation of currently implemented freshman and sophomore offerings has been formative in nature. In addition to standard University evaluation forms, special instruments have been devised for each of the modules contained in the new offerings. Continuous feedback is elicited from students regarding content relevance, teacher preparedness, potential value in light of career choices and mode of presentation. All formalized data received to date reflect an extremely positive reception of the changes on the part of students with the lowest single set of scores reflecting an eighty-three per cent agreement in positive benefits of the Integrated Curriculum.

Outside evaluators have been brought on campus annually for the purpose of receiving objective feedback on the products and processes of the project. During the first year, Dr. John Bolin, an organizational development specialist for a large Florida public school system, reviewed goals and objectives, noted progress and identified points at which the project seemed to be "spinning its wheels." During the 1976-77 academic year, Dr. Robert Henderson, Professor of Special Education Administration at the University of Illinois, provided feedback similar in nature but wider in scope due to increased implementation activities.

A faculty retreat is held annually for purposes of noting progress, determining direction, assigning tasks and setting time lines. These meetings are absolutely necessary in view of the soft money base upon which faculty support services are predicated. Reinforcement of faculty approximations towards the organizationally-defined goals is also a major outcome of such a retreat.

Personnel Involved

Management

Deans' Projects specify the Deans of the Schools of Education as Project Directors. The rationale for this requirement is that a project such as is described herein requires leadership above the Divisional or Departmental levels if meaningful change is to be brought about. Initially, an Associate Project Director, a secretary and a graduate assistant comprised the project staff. The number of on-going activities, administrative duties and schedule conflicts ultimately resulted in the formation of a Management Team comprised of the Associate Project Director, a member of the Division of Special Education and Rehabilitation and a member from the non-Special Education faculty. The Team has the responsibility to monitor task forces and to provide administrative input into processes and decisions affecting the outcome of the project. In addition to the Dean and the Management Team, the two Associate Deans are intricately involved. At the present time, the School of Education has an Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and an Associate Dean for Graduate Programs. Responsibility for implementation of the Integrated Curriculum fell largely on the shoulders of the Undergraduate Dean. The Graduate Dean was involved in the planning

of fifth-year programs and options to standard classroom teaching preparation programs. As a result of our latest faculty retreat, however, and upon the suggestion of organizational development specialists, the roles of the Associate Deans will be changed to reflect cross-level involvement. In January, 1978, the Graduate Dean will become Dean of Instruction and the Undergraduate Dean will assume the role of Dean of Administration. Such a change should clearly separate planning from implementation and more clearly identify responsibilities for leadership in the new program.

Instructional Faculty

All faculty members responsible for teaching undergraduate courses serve in some capacity within the project. Initially committees were established for each of the four years of undergraduate education. Committee leadership emerged naturally, and goals, objectives and processes were defined within the groups. These committees eventually gave way to Cluster Committees such as the Developmental Foundations Committee. Faculty members arranged the competencies and determined how they wanted to deliver the services to students. Each committee in effect assigned teaching responsibilities to its membership which assignments were approved by Division Chairpersons and the Dean. Scheduling was arranged by the Undergraduate Dean as were the newly-developed student advisory procedures.

The Director of the Center for Field Services and the Associate Project Director served as ex-officio members to each of the committees. The role of field services should be emphasized in a program such as described here since the Field is the laboratory or demonstration site for most of the on-campus teaching. The presence of the Field Service Director on each

committee provided a safeguard against student duplication of processes and overload in the field experiences.

Budget

As was mentioned earlier, this program is funded primarily through funds provided by the United States Office of Education, Bureau of Education for the Handicapped. Originally funded out of discretionary funds, Dean's Projects now fall within the category of Section VI-D of P.L. 94-142.

Boston College has for the past three years been awarded a grant of forty-thousand dollars annually to conduct this project. Of that amount, approximately seventy per cent is allocated to the salaries and benefits of the Associate Project Director, the Secretary and the Graduate Assistant. Staff and faculty development account for another twenty per cent with approximately ten per cent allocated to office supplies, telephone, duplicating services, etc. In this, the third year of the project, instead of having a graduate assistant, the two members of the Management Team each receive a small stipend for their services.

Conclusion

Boston College has undertaken the task of completely revising its core curriculum for the training of elementary teachers. The task could not be accomplished by a single individual but rather must be a combined commitment of administration, faculty, students and practitioners in the field. Their joint efforts have resulted in a teacher preparation program which is above all else an actualizing of theory, instruction, faculty and student demonstration and school and agency cooperation geared to

meeting the needs of a wider range of children in elementary classrooms.

The implementation of this program is only complete through the sophomore level. It is hoped that through a three-year continuation grant the project will achieve total fruition through the development of both undergraduate and graduate programs, documented as to their efficacy and transferable to our many sister institutions nationwide.